

Are you aware that you can find help by contacting?

- Your Doctor to make an appointment
- CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services) from 0 - 18 years
Southern Region Ph: 8204 4556
Northern Region Ph: 8161 7389
Country Region Ph: 1800 819 089 (toll free)
- Kids Helpline Ph: 1800 551 800
Web and email counselling available
24 hours 7 days per week
Website: www.kidshelp.com.au
- Life Line Ph: 13 11 14
24 hours 7 days per week
- COMIC (Children Of Mentally Ill Consumers)
Website: www.howstat.com/comic
- COPMI (Children Of Parents with a Mental Illness) National Initiative
Website: www.copmi.net.au
- YOUNG CARERS Australia
Website: www.youngcarers.net.au
- REACH OUT
Website: www.reachout.com.au

In an EMERGENCY Ph: 000
(Ambulance, fire, police)

Things to know

It is not your fault. No one can cause someone else to have a mental illness

It is OK to ask to visit your Mum or Dad if they are in hospital

Talk to someone you trust. Talk to a safe person (a family member, a counsellor, a teacher, a relative or a close friend)

It is important to know that you can ask questions

Your feelings are okay. It is okay to feel sad, lonely, angry, or confused

Take special care of yourself. Treat yourself, do stuff you like

Remember, anyone can have a mental illness. It can happen to all sorts of people

It is not kind to tease or bully anyone about mental illness

Remember
You are not alone!



What about me?

It is about me too!

Talking to children about
Mental Health is ok!

Supporting Our Family



COMIC

(Children Of Mentally Ill Consumers)
under the auspices of
The Mental Illness Fellowship of SA

<http://www.howstat.com/comic>

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Kids pay a high price for their invisibility.

Children of parents living with a mental illness are 'invisible' within the mental health care system and continue to fall through the gap between the Child and Adolescent Mental Health and the Adult Mental Health Services.

Children are not identified and offered support because the right questions are not being asked. On the initial admission data system, these questions need to be asked:

- "Are you a parent/guardian?"
- "Does your child/children live with you?"
- "Do you need to arrange care for your child/children?"

Follow up information needs to also be included. When these questions are asked the number of children affected by parental mental illness will become evident. Currently no statistics are collated.

It can be very confusing for a child who grows up in a household where things may be not quite right. Some children may feel guilty, over burdened, isolated and take on responsibilities far beyond their years, such as, cooking, cleaning, supervising medication, being a full time carer for their parent and looking after younger siblings.

Children maybe trying to come to terms with feeling ashamed because of poor community understanding about mental illness. Children may be dealing with many grief and loss issues, or coming to terms with the loss of their own potential.

Issues commonly identified include lack of trust, relationship difficulties, high carer stress, and the development of patterns of avoidance or over involvement with family members. Children are often powerless and helpless, therefore, they do not have a voice and often do not know where to turn to for help.

COMIC (Children of Mentally Ill Consumers) developed a Supporting Our Family Kit which includes a 'Child Care Plan' for the child to fill out with the help of their well parent. Having a Plan in place avoids any unnecessary stress to the family if the parent becomes unwell.

It is also very reassuring for the child to know what will happen if their parent is unable to look after them. This Kit can be downloaded from the COMIC web site: www.howstat.com/comic

The aim of the Kit is to heighten awareness of some of the issues children may face at the same time as trying to get an education and grow up. It hopes to de-stigmatise mental illness within the community, encourage parents to ask for help and discuss their mental illness with their children.

When childhood issues are not dealt with they maybe carried into adulthood where they can impact on relationship development and the ability to find peace and satisfaction.

This brochure is an initiative of COMIC (Children Of Mentally Ill Consumers) under the auspices of The Mental Illness Fellowship of SA

The information contained in this brochure is a guide only and COMIC takes no responsibility for people relying on, or using this information.



My COMIC POCKET CARE PLAN

It is helpful to have a plan and know who to contact if your Parent becomes unwell and is unable to look after you. Talk about this with your Mum/Dad.

Doctor's name and phone number:

My parent's key worker and phone number:

The person that knows I would like to stay with them and Mum/Dad says it is okay

How I can contact the person that will be caring for me. (Home, work, mobile phone number)

Important phone numbers - Look at one of your hands, count your fingers, this will give you the number of people that can help you;

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

Please cut, fold and always keep in your pocket.
For a large 'Care Plan' and more information visit:
www.howstat.com/comic